THE SEVENTH DAY.

4th March, 1924.

The Assembly met at 11-30 A. M., on Tuesday, the 4th March, 1924.

The Dewan presided.

In opening the proceedings the Dewan said :—" Before we proceed, Gentlemen, I should like to say how sorry I feel for my inability to preside over the Assembly sittings last week owing to my ill-health. I did not anticipate this, as you would probably have gathered from my attending here on the opening day and reading out my Address.

I have also to tell you that, as matters now stand, I can preside over the Assembly only to-day and the day after to-morrow.

I think it would be advantageous if members would kindly try to make their speeches as short as possible, so that we may get through as many subjects as possible during the time I am able to preside over the Assembly—I mean, these two days"

The consideration of the subjects was then proceeded with.

75. New roads in Todupuzha taluk.

Mr. N. J. Kuncheria (Member, Todupuzha taluk) represented that the northern taluks of the State were very poor in the matter of means of communication as compared with the southern taluks. While there was one mile of road for every one and a quarter square miles in the Trivandrum Division, three square miles in the Quilon Division and 3½ square miles in the Kottayam Division, there was only one mile of road for every seven square miles in the Devicolam Division. In the Todupuzha taluk itself, there was only one mile of road for every nine and a half square miles. If population and revenue were taken into consideration, Todupuzha deserved better treatment, though it was still sparsely populated. Of the 51 miles of roads in the taluk, only 38 miles were constructed by the Government, the rest being estate roads, and even out of the former, only six miles of the Todupuzha-Muvattupuzha road and six miles of the Todupuzha-Arakkulam road were being well maintained. Even the sums annually sanctioned for means of communication in the taluk were not being expended in that direction. For instance, out of the sum of Rs. 10,000 sanctioned in 1098 for a bridge at Pulikkal crossing, Todupuzha, not a pie was spent on that work that year. It was highly necessary that the construction of the bridge should be taken up immediately. Again, a long time had elapsed since the beginning of the construction of the Arakkulam road. If only the sum sanctioned for each work had been expended every year on that work, all the works would have been completed long ago.

None of the roads of the taluk were connected with one another ; and hence very little benefit was being derived from such roads. For trade facilities it was necesssry to connect Todupuzha with the British Districts on the other side of the ghats. Two lines were being surveyed for this purpose, *viz.*, (1) by extending the Arakkulam road to the east and connecting it with the Peermade road near Aiyappancoil, and (2) by connecting the Arakkulam road at its ninth mile with the Velliyamattam road at its 5th mile and thence extending the line to the 6th mile of Karimaunur road, and through the Teakoy reserve to the Kumili road along Tompan saddle. Of these the second line was the better one, being less costly to the Government and more convenient to the people.

Secondly, the Member requested that a cartable road might be cut from the Arakkulam-Todupuzha road to the Antinad-Melkavu road. That road was quite necessary.

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly

Thirdly, the road from Todupuzha to Karimannur might be joined from its 6th mile to the Vazhakkulam-Kotamangalam road.

Lastly, the Member requested that the Todupuzha-Muvattupuzha road might be connected from the 9th mile to the Todupuzha-Palakkuzha road at its 6th mile.

Dewan's reply.—Mr. Kuncheria, in regard to backwardness of communications in your taluk there is no difference of opinion as between you and the Government; but I do not think that communications in your taluk are so bad as you want to make out. The density of population of your taluk is 118 per square mile. You grant that, judged by the density of population elsewhere, say, in the coast taluks, your taluk is still very sparsely populated, the density there being about 1,000 per square mile. You must also remember that the Todupuzha taluk has been newly opened up, and that having a net-work of roads through and through the taluk is a matter of time. It is not a thing which can be achieved in one or ten or even 20 years. It is a gradual process. We do recognise that Todupuzha is backward in communications, and, as I stated last year in the Assembly, we do attempt, with the limited resources at our command, to give increased allotments and we have given increased allotments for certain works which are now being carried out. We have also made arrangements for starting the construction of a bridge at Todupuzha itself, and we will, as time goes on, do our best to improve the means of communication in your taluk and spend as much money as possible.

You have referred, in particular, to some roads. The Government recognise the importance of the first road mentioned by you, *viz.*, Todupuzha-Arakkulam road, and the necessity for extending it eastward to meet the Kumili road. It is a very big proposition. All the region beyond Arakkulam is reserved forest and it goes across the cardamom hills area. The success of this route will depend upon the completion of the road from Devicolam to Peermade. It will take very many years for its completion. It is an important road and it would afford much facility for communication. We propose to expedite the work on that road as far as possible.

The next road you referred to, is the one from Minachil to Arakkulam connecting Muttam with the 2nd mile of the Antinad-Melkavu road. That is equally important. We have recognised the importance of that road also. The Chief Engineer proposes to investigate it. When he has investigated it and prepared an estimate, we shall try to allot money for starting that work.

The third work that you referred to, *viz.*, the road to connect Karimannur and Neyseri road with the Todupuzha-Vazhakulam road, is, I think, not quite so urgent for the reason that the Vazhakkulam road itself has just been started. We have, I would rather say, not started the work yet. The alignment has been done; land has to be acquired; and when that road is completed, it will be time for us to consider the question of constructing the road you refer to.

The fourth road you mentioned is the short connection between the Todupuzha-Muvattupuzha road and the Todupuzha-Palakkuzha road. That is a short road and is now a village track. That also will be investigated. But I must request you to remember that all these are matters which will take time. There is no use in saying: 'You promised to give us more money at the last Assembly; you promised to improve communications; what have you done?' One year is a very short time to expect tangible improvement. We shall try our very best to improve communications in North Travancore. We know that North Travancore is backward in communications.

76. Means of communication in the Kunnatnad taluk.

Mr. C. P. Tarakan (Member, Kunnatnad taluk) thanked the Dewan for his presence in the House and began his representation by a reference to the sad demise of Mr. C. J. Curien of Kottayam, member of the Legislative Council and a prominent member of the Syrian Christian community. Coming to his representation proper, the Member prayed for the widening and deepening of the Pappara

LIBRARY ARCHIVES Kerala Legislative Assembly